IN THE CLAIMS:

On page 18 at line 1, please delete the word "Claims" and insert --What is claimed is-- therefor.

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ A method for continuing a multi-player game in case of an absence of a player participating in said game, said method comprising :
   - running a multi player game application,
   - characterized by
   - receiving an indication that said player taking part in said multi-player game is absent,
   - continuing the game by simulating the participation of said player who is actually absent.

2. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to claim 1, wherein said multi-player game is a network based multi-player game.

3. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
   - ~~Monitoring~~ monitoring the inputs of at least one player of said multi-player game,
   - ~~Analyzing~~ analyzing said inputs to determine gaming characteristics of said at least one monitored player, and
   - ~~Simulating~~ simulating the participation of said absent player in correspondence with said determined gaming characteristics.

4. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to claim 3, further comprising determining a result of said game based on said determined gaming characteristics of said at least one monitored player.

5. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to claim 3, further comprising transferring said determined gaming characteristics to another gaming device.

6. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to claim 1, wherein said indication that a player is absent comprises a notification received from said absent player.

7. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to claim 1, further comprising sending a notification to at least one of said other players of said multi-player game, said notification comprising an information that the participation of at least one player is actually simulated.

8. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to claim 1, further comprising the interruption of said game, if all players are absent.

9. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to claim 1, further comprising terminating said simulation of the participation, if said absent player returns to the game.

10. (currently amended) ~~Software~~ A software tool comprising program code means stored on a computer readable medium for carrying out the method of ~~anyone of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 1 when said software tool is run on a computer or network device.

11. (currently amended) ~~Computer~~ A computer program product comprising program code means stored on a computer readable medium for carrying out the method of ~~anyone of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 1 when said program product is run on a computer or network device.

12. (currently amended) ~~Computer~~ A computer program product comprising program code, downloadable from a server for carrying out the method of ~~anyone of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 1 when said program product is run on a computer or network device.

13. (currently amended) ~~Computer~~ A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave and representing a program that instructs a computer to perform the steps of the method of ~~anyone of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 1.

14. (currently amended) ~~Multi-player~~ A multi-player gaming device for continuing a multi-player game in case of an absence of a player participating in said game, comprising:
- a memory,
- a processor being connected to said memory, said processor being configured to run a multi-player game program,
- at least two interfaces being connected to said processor, said interfaces being configured

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to exchange game data,

characterized by

- a detector to detect an indication that a player of said multi-player game is absent, and

- a simulation component being connected to said processor, said simulation component being configured to simulate the participation of an absent player on the game, if said absence indication has been detected.

15. (currently amended) ~~Multi-player~~ The multi-player gaming device according to claim 14 further comprising a network interface.

16. (currently amended) ~~Multi-player~~ The multi-player gaming device according to claim 14 further comprising a mobile telephone.

17. (currently amended) ~~Multi-player~~ The multi-player gaming device according to claim 14, wherein said simulation component comprises an artificial intelligence engine.

18. (currently amended) ~~Network~~ A network multi-player game server capable of continuing a multi-player game, if a participant in said game becomes absent, comprising:

- a memory,

- a processor being connected to said memory, said processor being configured to run a multi-player game program,

- at least one interface connected to said processor, each said ~~interfaces~~ interface being configured to receive and transmit game data,

said network multi-player game server being characterized by

- a detector to detect an indication that a player of said multi-player game is absent, and

a simulation component being connected to said processor, said simulation component being

configured to simulate the participation of an absent player, if said absence indication has

been detected.